PATRONS! The latest episode of the Suez Crisis is out NOW for all Patrons at the $5 level and above!

Episode 2.12: Collusion & Delusion follows on from the previous episode, and takes us to the contentious few days between 22-24 October 1956, where the war plan that would create the Suez Crisis was created, developed and signed by Britain, France and Israel in an unassuming Parisian suburb. This process was, of course, far from straightforward or guaranteed to produce a result. It required the French reassuring both the Israeli and British representatives about the solid nature of their plan, and it also demonstrated the lack of tact which Selwyn Lloyd in particular seemed to possess. One of the most incredible scenes though comes near the end of the episode when, on the evening of 24th October, Britain’s representatives return home to Anthony Eden with a copy of the Sevres Protocol in hand, only to come under rhetorical attack for leaving this paper trail in the course of their top secret discussions.

Eden was well aware that there could be no evidence of what had been done at Sevres, and he would send these men back to France to track down and destroy any pieces of evidence that remained. The Prime Minister, of course, was already planning ahead to what he would say when word of the Crisis got out. For the sake of plausible deniability, Eden wished there to be no evidence and no written record of the collusion. Thankfully for historians since, Eden’s wishes were not fulfilled. Here was the last piece of the Suez puzzle being set in place, so I hope you’ll give it a listen and enjoy!

Hello and welcome history friends patrons to 1956 episode 27. Last time, we laid the controversial foundational blocks for the main controversy to come. The Anglo-French delegations had met in Anthony Eden’s private estate, and the French had revealed their conspiratorial plan to ensure that an Anglo-French intervention in Suez took place, under the cover of an Israeli-Egyptian war. Through collusion with Israel, Anthony Eden would ensure that Britain would gain its satisfaction, and that the Suez Canal would once again fall under British control. So determined was Eden to avenge himself on President Nasser, to reassert British primacy in Egypt, and to make Britain appear, all the while, like a power taking the moral high ground, that he never stopped to truly consider the sheer shadiness of the entire scheme. Perhaps, even more incredibly, he believed that he would get away with it. In this episode then, the apex of this stunning tale comes together, as the final pieces of the puzzle are fused during an intense period of Anglo-French-Israeli cooperation, based in the incognito Parisian suburb of Sevres. It to this weighted time in history that we now return, as I take you to late October, 1956…

\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

We can only imagine how frayed the nerves of the two men were. Driving as quickly, but as inconspicuously, as he could, Donald Logan had a very important passenger – the British FS Selwyn Lloyd. For several months, Logan had served as Lloyd’s assistant, as his private secretary, at a time when secrets were passing through the upper echelons of British government on a scale unequalled since the SWW. As if testifying to this, officially, Selwyn Lloyd wasn’t even meant to be in the car with him. Officially, Selwyn Lloyd had been laid low with sinus troubles, and was recuperating over the week beginning 22nd October. The effort to maintain this façade was such that Lloyd’s regular driver had been given the week off, since he wouldn’t be needed. Hence, Donald Logan, his assistant, was now at the wheel. During the course of preparing for the secretive trip, where Lloyd was to be driven to the airport and whisked away to Sevres, Logan had scribbled a quick note in Lloyd’s office diary which read ‘A day, marked among other things, by a near fatal car accident – for which my driving was not responsible.’

Had Donald Logan nearly crashed the car? In fact, this referred to the part of the trip when they had already arrived in Paris, and a jumpy French military driver was at the wheel. According to Logan, who recalled the events of the day some time later, recording this incident had less to do with what had actually happened on the road, and more to do with the secretive nature of the FS’s schedule. Logan recalled:

We were being driven pretty fast by a French military driver, when we came to a crossroads that had no light or policeman on it, and another car being driven equally fast came straight across our nose. It was perhaps my own concern, rather than anything else, that made me think, if we had an accident, what explanation could we have given. That was the only significant in the near accident. [But] I may have made a mistake when compiling the diary of Selwyn’s engagements for that week. It would obviously have been awkward to have a gap, and thinking of putting something innocuous in the diary to remind Selwyn of what he was doing, in case the date was not as significant as it turned out later to be, I put in a reference to the incident, to remind in cryptic form of the date of clandestine visit to Sevres. I had no idea that this scrap of paper would get into the public archives. I ought not to have been so flippant. I thus drew more attention to the incident that it merited.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Had Logan simply written about the finer characteristics of the weather that day, and perhaps commented that the weather in Paris was nice also, or something to that effect, then Selwyn’s diary may never have been so striking. By advertising that a car accident involving the FS had nearly taken place, Logan invited attention to the day’s events, and he invited people to ask questions. This, of course, was the opposite of what he had wanted, but Logan was thinking of how to mark the day out as significant in his boss’ mind, rather than the fact that historians like myself would have access to all written material from Lloyd’s life. Donald Logan’s extract here is especially interesting because those that acted during this period in British history were especially skilled and deliberate when it came to covering their tracks. During high level meetings, which had the potential the cause controversy, written records were destroyed, as we’ll see. On the other hand, when record did have to be taken, it was done in such a way as to cover up the authors with plausible deniability. You may remember that one of the quotes which opened this series a few months back contained a commentary on this fact, wherein Lord Tedder, writing in his book *With Prejudice*, noted:

I expect that most of us have seen, sometimes with amusement and sometimes with anger, reports and orders obviously worded with an eye to the future historian, or, as we used to call them, "for the record.” The wording of signals and orders "for the record" is a very fine art, and well calculated to fox the historian.[[2]](#footnote-2)

Donald Logan’s crime in this case, at least in the mind of the likes of Eden, was that he had failed to think of what posterity would think. In the high levels of secrecy, it was perhaps inevitable that someone at some point would slip up, and leave us with a breadcrumb trail. Despite what Eden may have hoped, it was impossible to engage in the kind of scheme he was fronting without someone finding out about it. As it happened, the only first-hand surviving copy of what was agreed to as Sevres is located in the Israeli archives. The Sevres Protocol, as it was known, was written in French, and was destroyed by the British on Eden’s orders. Reportedly, when Selwyn Lloyd returned with his copy of the Sevres Protocol, Eden is supposed to have been aghast that such a document existed. He hadn't expected any written record of the meeting to be taken, let alone a damning document which provided irrefutable evidence of British collusion with the Franco-Israelis. Considering the squeaky clean image Eden wished to portray – which was necessary according to the stringent plan laid down, where Britain would intervene alongside France from the moral high ground, to protect the Canal – we can understand his haste to get all evidence to the contrary destroyed.

A modest villa at Sevres held the talks, and it was residence which held a special significance to the French delegation. Bonier de la Chapelle was the owner of the villa, but what truly mattered was the fate of de la Chapelle’s son, who had died after trying to assassinate the Vichy French governor of Algiers. One of the rooms was dedicated to the memory of this hero of the French resistance, and was in line with the common theme of comparing President Nasser to Hitler in the months before. Guy Mollet, Christian Pineau and several of their peers had been scions of the French resistance after all and now, gathered together as they were with Jewish statesmen of the highest order, they could feel as though they now continued on in the courageous traditions of their ancestors. The room chosen in the Sevres villa was a small one, filled with overgrowing greenery, to give the appearance of informality. It meant that nobody was out of sight, for one, but it also meant that chairs had to be awkwardly shifted around whenever anyone wished to leave. It was hardly the image that comes to mind when we imagine grand conspiracy, but it did the job.

Selwyn Lloyd and his assistant Donald Logan would not arrive until about 7PM, in the evening of the 22nd October, so from 4PM that day the French and Israelis sat down to chat. Now that Anthony Nutting was far away from the proceedings, we have to rely on another source to explain what actually happened behind closed doors. By far the best and most reliable source we have remains an Israeli by the name of Mordechai Bar-On, the chief of staff in the Israeli Defence Forces. Bar-On also happened to have a history degree, was multilingual, and would be tasked during the meeting with taking perhaps the only first-hand notes which survive to this day.[[3]](#footnote-3) Bar-On noted perceptively that the French and British refrained from taking any notes, since they feared some kind of expose, while he had permitted to take notes, which were then held under lock and key for over 40 years. Charged with being secretary of the Israeli delegation, Mordechai Bar-On recorded everything that occurred, even pronouncements from his own side which made him wince. He later recalled how David Ben-Gurion opened the meeting with the French in the afternoon by making, what Bar-On considered, a supremely embarrassing set of proposals. Bar-On wrote:

Ben-Gurion opened the discussion by offering what as his 'fantastic plan' to reorganize the entire Middle East. that I was somewhat embarrassed, since I considered totally anachronistic. It seemed more fitted to the kind discussions which took place at the end of the Great War the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. It was totally in the international realities since the Second World War. later that Ben-Gurion used this demarche to establish his own Israel was ready to participate in a plan which would be jointly in a dignified manner and in which Israel's interests would fully into account. He wanted to make clear that Israel would to play the role of a servant called upon for minor services consulted on the entire plan. He also warned against which would be undertaken without full consultation with Eisenhower.[[4]](#footnote-4)

At 7PM on 22nd October, Selwyn Lloyd walked into a strange scene. Already, those French and Israelis had been somewhat disgruntled when they had learned that Eden wouldn’t be attending. Since the French and Israeli government heads were present, this seemed something akin to a snub, especially since Selwyn Lloyd was not well liked by those present. Mordechai Bar-On remembered his impressions of the British FS, noting:

Selwyn Lloyd is a typical English diplomat. He had a shrill voice, which was saturated with an unpleasant tone of cynicism and dry humour. His face looked as if something stinking hangs permanently under his nose. A constant air of patronizing prohibits him from getting close to the person he converses with and clouds the entire conversation with an air of formality and chill.[[5]](#footnote-5)

Lloyd did not take long to upset those present. Before he had arrived, Ben-Gurion and Guy Mollet had managed to sort several issues out. Much would depend on the point of view of the British, the Israeli leader maintained, but he was cautiously optimistic that matters would be sorted out. This optimism faded fast though, when Lloyd bulldozed through Ben-Gurion’s concerns, and made conclusive, uncompromising statements about what must occur. It left no room for debate, and seemed to place all of the risk and burden of war on Israel. Ben-Gurion was furious – who did this jumped up little snob think he was? Mordechai Bar-On remembered how his President reacted, in short, sharp sentences, saying:

My reaction to the plan is negative and final. Israel does not want to be labelled an aggressor nor does she want ultimatums hurled at her. Israel will not initiate a war with Egypt, not now and not later. If we are attacked, we shall defend ourselves. If we have to face the Egyptians alone we shall overpower them. We may suffer heavy losses but our final victory is assured.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Earlier, before Selwyn Lloyd had arrived, Ben-Gurion had indicated that he was willing to see Israel assume a great deal of the military burden, so long as British and French air cover was provided – he didn’t want the Egyptian airforce to surround Israeli soldiers in the Sinai desert. Bar-On remembers that the Israeli leader said:

Israel is ready to start the war tomorrow if it will be carried out with full co-operation between the partners. Israel is even ready to take upon itself the main burden of the land operations. If Britain will send their bombers you could send your divisions home. The entire operation will only last a few hours and you will be able to send your divisions home.[[7]](#footnote-7)

This positivity and consideration was instantly shattered by Lloyd’s blundering. The British FS showed himself to be totally out of his element, and had attempted at once to command the main speaking time and dictate to the Israelis. Ben-Gurion, as we saw, was infuriated, and Selwyn Lloyd very nearly torpedoed the entire plan within an hour of his arriving at this curious meeting. Only some deep breaths and a consideration of the valued French partnership enabled Ben-Gurion to retain his composure, and he then outlined the plans laid down first by General Moshe Dayan, Israel’s commander in chief. Ben-Gurion said:

Israel is ready to begin a reprisal raid on Egypt on D-Day in the morning, reaching the canal by that evening. That night, Britain and France can meet and issue a demand to Egypt to clear all its forces from the canal zone and send a simultaneous demand to Egypt to refrain from approaching the canal. Since Israel is not interested in conquering the canal and its forces do not intend to reach it anyhow, this request will have no real meaning to us. If the Egyptians will not abide by the demand to clear the canal, the allies will start to bomb Egyptian air-bases the next morning.[[8]](#footnote-8)

But Selwyn Lloyd continued to blunder. He insisted that only a real act of war would do in the scheme – a mere raid was not good enough, it would have to be an actual invasion, or else the Anglo-French ultimatum and joint action wouldn’t appear justified. The Israelis had proposed shortening the timetable, so that Egypt’s airforce would be destroyed quicker. Lloyd said that no shortening of the timetable would be acceptable, since the suggested ‘scenario’ must be performed in a natural and persuasive rhythm. The start of the allied bombing might perhaps be advanced up to thirty-six hours after Zero Hour, but Lloyd insisted that he was not empowered to negotiate such a change. He also rejected Christian Pineau's suggestion to use the French airforce to defend Israel during the first two days, from bases in Cyprus. In Lloyd’s mind, this would prove to the outside world that the three powers were in cahoots. As Donald Logan explained, Lloyd was against the plan from the beginning, and had favoured cooperation through the UN instead. Logan recalled:

He did not like the job that he had been sent to do. So naturally he did not go in smiling. He was not pleased with the task ahead of him. He was not a man to go into a situation like this in a very affable way. He had a difficult task to do, and was there knowing that the French and the Israelis were already close together. He was to find, in the conversation, that they were evene closer than he thought, so he had an uphill task. He had a marked lack of enthusiasm for what he had to do. Of course they thought he was po-faced. Moreover, what he said was not agreeable to them, and that encouraged them to think that he was unhelpful.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Selwyn Lloyd was unable to hide his true feelings, so his counterparts made no efforts to hide their feelings towards him. The meeting continued on like this into the night of 22nd October. The Israelis wanted more guarantees, while Selwyn Lloyd wanted to have everything his way. The next day, Lloyd was scheduled to return to London and report to Eden, and Pineau was so concerned that Lloyd would pain the plot in negative terms that he elected to travel to London himself. As a former English teacher, Pineau could certainly be relied upon to make a coherent case to the potentially hesitant Brits.

The French urgency is captured by Bar-On, but while he puts it down to the explanation given by Guy Mollet – that time was of the essence in light of Soviet involvement etc. – the actual reason for his hurry was the capture of a large vessel carrying arms from Egypt to Algeria, which infuriated the French public and caused a demand for action against Nasser to ring out among the press. Guy Mollet and Christian Pineau knew that if they didn’t produce something concrete soon, it could well mean the end of their government. In this case, they proved to be the frantic glue that held the whole conspiracy together.

Selwyn Lloyd travelled to London to speak to his peers on 23rd October, leaving the French and Israelis still in Sevres as he did so. Among the French and Israelis, the burning French desire to finalise the plan and put it into practice soon became abundantly clear. The French defence minister, considered a good and sympathetic friend of the Israelis, said during their lunchtime meeting that:

During the last few months when I have been in close contact with Israel I have told you only the truth, so you may take my words at face value. I believe that if this operation does not take place now France will not in the foreseeable future have any chance of a joining a combined operation. I can assure you that in the future too France will not refrain from helping Israel to the best of its ability, but I am not sure that we shall be able to help you to the extent that we are planning now.[[10]](#footnote-10)

While the French and Israelis reassured one another, Selwyn Lloyd was close to a breakdown. He had been immensely troubled by this imperfect march towards war with Egypt, and now that a conspiracy of sorts was in the pipeline, the temperature of his cold feet only decreased further. He had felt close to a breakthrough with the Egyptians in the UN, before Eden had pulled him back for this latest scheme. ‘I am so confused and exhausted that I honestly have no advice to offer anymore’, Lloyd confessed in person to Anthony Nutting, who was wholly against the plan from the outset. Cabinet was assembled, and Lloyd informed those assembled that ‘from secret conversations which have been held in Paris with representatives of the Israeli government, it now appeared that the Israelis would not alone launch a full scale attack against Egypt.’[[11]](#footnote-11)

The lack of any substantial objection to what was going down in the background from any one of these assembled ministers seems to suggest that many knew more about the scheme than they later let on, but regardless of who knew what, it was clear that Lloyd would not be capable of approaching the Egyptians in the UN to try again; that ship had sailed. In addition, the French were plainly uninterested in compromise, and the pressure upon Guy Mollet’s administration was well known. Lloyd’s apathy singled him out as an easy target in Eden’s mind. After having helped jolly the plan along in the past, Selwyn Lloyd had seemed eager to jeopardise the whole operation in his face to face dealings with the Israelis and French the day before. Eden had not at all been happy with the downcast tone of Lloyd’s report on the proceedings, and he arranged to have an after dinner meeting with Lloyd and the very anxious Christian Pineau, who had recently flown over from Paris to ensure that the plan went ahead.

Just before Pineau had travelled to London, he had spoken with General Dayan of the Israeli deputation, and had received from him the latest version of the plan which Israel would be willing to negotiate on. Pineau said he would forward its contents to the British when he arrived later that day, and these contents are worth looking at considering what went down later on. We don’t need to know every gritty detail, but one point in particular, that Israel would not open a full-scale war but would initiate an operation representing an actual threat to the Suez Canal, which would look like a ‘real act of war’, should be of special interest to us. The Suez Canal was both the prize that the Anglo-French wished to seize back, and it was the immensely convenient pretext, which would enable Eden to claim that he was intervening for the good of all free trading nations, among other lofty goals. If the British would agree to this, then Israel wouldn’t need to declare war on Nasser’s government, and could conduct a highly organised commando raid instead, while they waited to see what the British and French would do. There was, high on the list of Israeli fears, the concern that Britain would abandon Israel in the midst of the crisis which was to come.

General Dayan also suggested that instead of an 'ultimatum' France and Britain would issue an 'appeal'. The formulation of the 'appeal' to Israel would differ in language from the one sent to Egypt. Israel would not be condemned as an aggressor. This approach contained far more benefits than the original plan of publicly condemning both Israel and Egypt – President Ben-Gurion, understandably, didn’t want to be condemned as an aggressor, since this would make it that much harder to legally acquire any post-war spoils. Still included in the list of requests was the one which urged the British and French forces to start their operation thirty-six hours after the beginning of the Israeli operation. Israeli planners were fearful of complications arising from the Egyptian airforce, and they wanted these planes destroyed before they managed to blunt any part of the allied advance.

An appeal to Egypt would include a demand that Egypt cease hostile acts against Israel, but Israel would accede to the allies’ demand to cease fire only if the Egyptians did so as well, which of course, was immensely unlikely. So long as Nasser refrained from making peace, Israel would therefore also not be painted as the sole aggressor – those two Middle Eastern rivals were just as bad as the other, the narrative could go, and the Anglo-French were thus forced to pull them apart for the safety and security of the Suez Canal. Practical aid for Israel would come from that aspect of the plan which stipulated that during the waiting period before the intervention of British and French forces, two French fighter squadrons would land in Israel and French pilots would man Israeli Mysteres whose crews had not completed their training. Also two French battleships would be deployed along the Israeli coastline to reinforce the defence of its cities. Great Britain would undertake to refrain from providing any assistance to Jordan or to Iraq if either of them should attack Israel. Israel would undertake not to initiate an attack on Jordan. Equipped with this not-yet-ratified sketch of the Israeli position, Pineau flew to London to inform his British peers of what the Israelis wanted.

With these plans in hand, Christian Pineau met with Eden and Selwyn Lloyd in an informal after dinner discussion on 23rd October. No record exists of what was said during their meeting, and since only the three men were present, we can’t rely on any other individual testimonies either. This reminds us of a point we’ve made before about taking down what had been said ‘for the record’. We have to believe that if nothing was taken down, this was a deliberate decision reserved for only the most sensitive and incendiary topics for conversation. One thing we do know, considering what happened the following day, is that at this dinner in the evening of 23rd October, Eden, Pineau and Selwyn Lloyd agreed that the British should make their return to Sevres the next morning, and that the discussions with the Israelis should be finalised. By this point, the most important bone of contention for Eden was that, whatever the Israelis and Egyptians did to one another, Israel must make a concerted advance towards the Canal, otherwise the Anglo-French justification for intervention in the name of protecting that Canal would make no sense. We must also assume that Pineau put forward the points which General Dayan had shown him earlier in the day, and that these were discussed, though we don’t know Eden’s complete thoughts on them.

Another point which also may have been discussed during the dinner was the question of who would return to Sevres to represent Britain. Pineau was eager that it should be Eden himself, to show the Israelis that Britain was determined to play its role to the end. Eden swatted this suggestion away, but agreed that Lloyd should not go back. Instead, it made sense to send someone who knew what was up, but also who could be expected to support this new policy in words and deeds. Because Lloyd did not support it in his heart of hearts, he had no heart to fight for it and gain the best terms for Britain. In choosing someone to accompany Donald Logan back to Sevres then, Eden landed on a seemingly random figure in the FO – Selwyn Lloyd’s deputy under-secretary Patrick Dean. Dean was the chairman of the joint intelligence committee, which pooled intelligence and information between the army and MI6. While Dean was a critical middleman for keeping the different arms of British defence informed, he needed a briefing from Donald Logan on the plane journey over to Sevres on the morning of Wednesday 24th October.

The French arrived before the British, and Christian Pineau talked again with Guy Mollet and his French peers about what had been discussed the previous night. In Christian Pineau’s pocket was a paper written by Anthony Eden. This included six points, all essentially based on what Pineau had taken down the day before from the dictation of General Moshe Dayan, just before meeting the British for dinner. After a brief consultation and some minor amendments, the Israelis pronounced their acceptance of the paper. This was very good news indeed for the French, and they now had to wait merely for the British to arrive so that all could be on the same page. Soon two British officials, Donald Logan and Patrick Dean, appeared at the villa and the last meeting began, with the French and Israeli delegations headed by their respective Prime Ministers. It was on this day that the agreement and cooperation for this unbelievable conspiracy was plotted, step by step. Indeed, much to the surprise of the British delegates, it was also put to paper, as Donald Logan recalled:

We had been sitting in the room all afternoon, and the first thing that Pat [Patrick Dean] or I heard about any document being produced was towards the end of the afternoon, when we heard the sound of someone typing in the neighbouring room. Three copies of the Protocol were produced for us, with the comment: ‘This is a record of what we have been discussing. Do you agree?’ That was the first indication we had that anybody intended to make a record of the conversation. It must have been done by both the Israelis and the French, judging by the way the document was put together and its style…It was an accurate account, and seemed to us to be a useful record to take back to the PM, to show that we had got the Israelis to agree to a significant military move against the Canal.[[12]](#footnote-12)

In their hot little hands, after ascribing their signatures to the document, Patrick Dean and Donald Logan now held one of the incredible documents of 20th century British diplomacy. A document which gave the British government express permission to lie, to manipulate public and foreign opinion, and to cloak their actions in the guise of the greater goods of free trade and the security of the Suez Canal. All eventualities had now been accounted for, and Britain, France and Israel were now bound to act together for better or worse. Each side had their own reasons for getting involved, and each party depended upon the other. Israel had already set its sights upon territorial expansion in Sinai, which Britain and France tacitly approved. France believed that upon the scheme going ahead, Nasser would be so discredited that his regime would collapse, which would then empower the French grip on Algeria. In Britain, Eden’s complex Middle Eastern foreign policy would be greatly aided by the removal of Nasser, and Eden also believed that British stock would be greatly increased by this determined show of force against disturbers of the peace. The reclamation of the Suez Canal was of course a further incentive. The three powers were thus linked by their vested interests, but one thing they held in common was a deep seated desire to see President Nasser destroyed, and for Egypt to withdraw back into its docile box.

Dean and Logan returned to London in the evening of 24th October, with the Sevres Protocol in hand. By 10.30PM, they were at 10 Downing Street, and Eden at first seemed greatly pleased that the whole arrangement had been settled, and that all the loose ends had been tied up. His face fell though and became momentarily enraged though once the Sevres Protocol document was produced. Eden was of the impression that the scheme would have remained a handshake agreement between the three powers, but his reaction is all the more telling because of how negatively it paints the entire plot. Only a guilty man would be so concerned that the truth might get out. The British copy of the Sevres Protocol was destroyed, and Dean and Logan were even sent back to Paris the next day, on Thursday 25th October, to destroy any remaining versions of the document.

They received a frosty French reception, while the Israelis had long since departed for Tel Aviv, and taken their copy with them. Some loose ends, it seemed, were destined to remain after all. Perhaps Dean and Logan comforted themselves and then Eden with the idea that the French and Israelis would never reveal the existence of the Sevres Protocol, because it would surely paint them in as negative a light as the British. Even without the big reveal of the Sevres Protocol in 1986, when Israel confirmed its existence beyond a shadow of a doubt, whispers remained among scholars of the conflict that there was more to the Suez Crisis than what actually met the eye. In 1979, before it could be said conclusively what had gone down during Suez, the historian Geoffrey Warner was able to note perceptively that:

Evidence exists…that normal bureaucratic routines were not always observed: officials were purposely excluded from important meetings and not told what had taken place; records were deliberately not kept of certain vital discussions, and so on. There are even suggestions that documents have been wilfully destroyed. The Israeli Prime Minister in 1956, David Ben-Gurion, told the American journalist, Cyrus Sulzberger, almost twelve years later that ‘Eden sent over to Paris after the affair in order to have all the original documents destroyed. But he found that I had copies. And I may note that it was only then that he became friendly to Israel.’[[13]](#footnote-13)

Covering up the incredible truth proved to be a campaign in and of itself, and in the end, this campaign of secrecy was a failure. However Eden justified the scheme to his conscience, and whatever he believed it would accomplish, it remained now to ride the wave that he had set in motion. Setting aside some time for humour, in the evening of 24th October 1956, General Moshe Dayan ‘with a cunning smile’, drew a cartoon showing John Bull and the French Marianne standing behind the figure of a child symbolizing ‘Little Israel’. All are facing the Suez Canal and the British and French figures say to Israel, 'After you, Sir!’ In five days, military operations would begin.

Next time history friends and patrons, we resume our story during the final days of peace, as the hours ticked by towards D-Day, when all the plotting and all the scheming came to fruition, and the Suez Crisis exploded onto the world stage. Until then, my name is Zack, and this has been 1956 episode 2.12. Thanks for listening and I’ll be seeing you all soon.

1. See Barry Turner, *Suez 1956*, pp. 289-290. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A. W. T. Tedder, *With Prejudice* (London, 1966), p. ii. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Avi Shlaim, ‘The Protocol of Sevres, 1956: Anatomy of a War Plot’, *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 73, No.3, Globalization and International Relations (Jul., 1997), pp. 509-530; pp. 510-511. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Mordechai Bar-On, ‘Three Days in Sèvres, October 1956’, History Workshop Journal, No. 62 (Autumn, 2006), pp. 172-186; p. 174. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Cited in *Ibid*, p. 177. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Cited in *Ibid*, p. 178. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Cited in *Ibid*, p. 176. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Cited in *Ibid*, p. 178. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Cited in Barry Turner, *Suez 1956*, p. 292. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Cited in Mordechai Bar-On, ‘Three Days in Sèvres, October 1956’, p. 180-181. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Cited in Barry Turner, *Suez 1956*, p. 295. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Cited in *Ibid*, p. 297. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. See Geoffrey Warner, ‘'Collusion' and the Suez Crisis of 1956’, *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), Vol. 55, No.2 (Apr., 1979), pp. 226-239; p. 227. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)